NSC BRIEFING

9 August 1956

25X1

EGYPTIAN SABOTAGE

[redacted]

We assess the prospects for success as follows:

A. Against the canal: prolonged interruption of canal operations by sabotage is most unlikely--assuming that the area is secured, equipment is available and clearance operations can begin quickly.

i. Blocking by sinking ships is the easiest technique. However, the longest complete interruption during WW II was 7 days, during which time a channel was cut around two ships sunk by air action.

25X1

ii. Mining would also require that the canal area be occupied and clearance operations undertaken. [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] Egypt's two destroyers, four minesweepers, and some of the motor torpedo boats recently acquired from the USSR probably can lay mines.

iii. Demolition along the canal channel could reduce the depth and prevent passage of large loaded ships until the obstruction was dredged. Dredging is a slow process: length of interruption would depend both on the number and weight of demolition charges used and upon availability of dredging equipment.

25X1 [redacted]

B. Against oil facilities: the oil refineries on the Mediterranean coast at Sidon and Tripoli in Lebanon are very small, and designed to supply only local needs.

i. If not guarded effectively, these local refineries could be easily sabotaged, particularly the one at Sidon. Damage to these refineries, [redacted] would mainly hurt Egypt's Lebanese allies.

ii. The huge export refineries are in the Persian Gulf at Abadan, Ras Tanura, Kuwait, and Bahrin, as well as Aden. The latter three are possibly vulnerable to Egyptian-inspired labor harassment, including sabotage attempts.

iii. The four oil pipelines to the Mediterranean are highly vulnerable to sabotage because of the physical difficulty of guarding their entire length. Inspections are made daily by air. ARAMCO and IPC lines carry approximately one million barrels daily to the Mediterranean; possibly half the distance underground. Sections of the two largest lines (30-32") could be blown out with two ring charges of about 50 lbs. of explosives. A break requires shutting down the line at the nearest pumping stations (located at approximately 200 mi. intervals) while repairs are made.

iv. The pumping stations themselves are vulnerable to sabotage, but are generally guarded by local security forces. In Jordan, Syria and Lebanon the effectiveness of such guards is doubtful.

v. Sabotage attempts against individual wells would have little strategic significance. The Iraqi and Iranian fields are guarded by the military. The Saudi Arabian fields appear less well guarded, [redacted] Kuwait are even less so.

25X1